

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAA-01 SES-02 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02  
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 IO-13 HA-05 MCT-02  
SSM-03 /074 W

-----121021 171407Z /44

P 171337Z AUG 78  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9263  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 04757

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4  
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, SY  
SUBJECT: EYEWITNESS TO KHALIL ASSASSINATION

1. SUMMARY: EYEWITNESSES TO ASSASSINATION OF AHMAD KHALIL ARE EVADING SECURITY AUTHORITIES FOR FEAR OF INTERROGATION AND TORTURE. FAMILY OF SMALL BOY WHO DID TESTIFY NOW FEARS RETALIATION FROM ASSASSINS. SECURITY FORCES ARE THUS IMPEDED BY THEIR OWN PRACTICES--A PERSUASIVE ARGUMENT AGAINST THE USE OF TORTURE HERE. END SUMMARY.

2. EYEWITNESS TO ASSASSINATION AUGUST 10 OF LT. COL. AHMAD KHALIL, DIRECTOR OF SECURITY PERSONNEL IN MININT (PREVIOUSLY ERRONEOUSLY REPORTED AS DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR), SAID KHALIL, HIS DRIVER, AND TWO OTHER AIDES WERE APPROACHING THEIR CAR FROM KHALIL'S APARTMENT WHEN TWO ASSASSINS APPROACHED FROM EITHER SIDE AND GUNNED THEM DOWN. ASSASSINS HAD BEEN LOITERING AROUND WAITING FOR KHALIL. IT WAS ALL OVER INSTANTANEOUSLY AND ASSASSINS WALKED AROUND THE CORNER WHERE A MOTORCYCLE WAS APPARENTLY WAITING. EYEWITNESS SAID IT HAPPENED SO FAST HE ONLY HAD IMPRESSION OF ASSAS-  
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SINS. SINCE HE FEARED SECURITY POLICE WOULD NEVER BELIEVE HE COULD NOT PROVIDE MORE DETAIL, HE FLED THE SCENE TO AVOID DETENTION, INTERROGATION, AND POSSIBLE TORTURE. ASSASSINATION WAS ALSO WITNESSED BY WOMAN ON BALCONY OF KHALIL'S BUILDING WHO SIMILARLY DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF INCIDENT FOR FEAR OF INTERROGATION. BOTH THESE EYEWITNESSES WERE PERSONAL FRIENDS OF THE KHALIL FAMILY.

3. ONE EYEWITNESS WHO DID PROVIDE DESCRIPTION OF ASSASSINS TO SECURITY POLICE WAS EIGHT-YEAR-OLD BOY. HIS FAMILY IS PETRIFIED THAT ASSASSINS OR THEIR COLLEAGUES WILL NOW MURDER THE BOY IN RETALIATION AND THEY HAVE ASKED SECURITY AUTHORITIES TO RELOCATE THE FAMILY TO ANONYMOUS ADDRESS. THEY CLAIM THAT WHEN DR. NAAME, PROMINENT ALAWITE RELATIVE OF PRESIDENT ASSAD, WAS ASSASSINATED LAST MARCH A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL WITNESSED THE EVENT AND GAVE POLICE DESCRIPTIONS OF NAAME'S KILLERS. TWO DAYS LATER THE GIRL WAS KILLED BY A HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER WHO THE FAMILY BELIEVED WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ASSASSINS.

4. SECURITY AUTHORITIES ARE UNLIKELY TO HAVE MUCH SUCCESS HERE TRACKING DOWN ASSASSINS AS LONG AS PUBLIC, INCLUDING THOSE FRIENDLY TO REGIME, REFUSES TO COOPERATE OUT OF FEAR OF TORTURE OR RETALIATION. WE WILL TRY TO MAKE THIS POINT IF APPROPRIATE OCCASION ARISES IN OUR DISCUSSIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. SEELYE

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Concepts:** ASSASSINATION, INVESTIGATIONS, REPRISALS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**TAGS:** PINS, PINT, SHUM, SY, (KHALIL, AHMAD)  
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